

DARLING DOWNS PARISH OF THE AELC
TRINITY OAKEY, ST PAUL'S GREENWOOD, ST JOHN'S AUBIGNY,
BETHLEHEM TOOWOOMBA

10 December 2017

Bulletin for Harvest Thanksgiving

HYMNS: 560 564 568 563

INTROIT: You receive praise in silence in Zion, O God, and vows to You will be fulfilled.

O You who hear prayer, to You all human beings will come.

Iniquitous things have been prevailing over me. You Yourself will provide atonement for our rebellious actions.

Blessed is the person whom You choose and whom You bring near, that he may dwell in Your courts! We shall be satisfied with the good things of Your house, the holiness of Your temple.

You answer us in righteousness with awesome deeds, O our saving God, the Confidence of all the ends of the earth and of the most distant sea.

He is the One who sets the mountains in place by His strength, the One who puts on strength like a waistcloth.

He is the One who calms the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, and the turmoil of the peoples.

Those who live at the ends of the earth have been in awe of Your miraculous signs. You make the places where morning dawns and the places where evening fades shout for joy.

You have taken care of the land and have caused it to overflow. You have enriched it abundantly. The stream of God is filled with water. You are providing their grain. For that is how You have prepared it.

You have given its furrows their fill of drink, and levelled off the edges of its furrows. You soften it with gentle rain, and bless its growth.

You have crowned the year of Your goodness, and Your wheel-tracks drip with fat. The pastures in the desert overflow. The hills are robed with joy.

The meadows are clothed with flocks, and the valleys are covered with grain. They are shouting for joy. Indeed, they are singing.

Psalm 65

COLLECT: Almighty God, You crown the fields with Your blessing and permit us to gather in the fruits of the earth. As stewards of Your creation, may we receive Your gifts in humble thankfulness and share Your bounty with those in need; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

READINGS: Deuteronomy 26:1-11 Firstfruits presented to the LORD.
2 Corinthians 9:6-15 Sowing generously.
Luke 12:13-21 The Parable of the rich fool.

SERMON: Deuteronomy 8:1-10 The Promised Land

¹"All the commandments which I command you this day you shall keep watch that you do them, so that you shall live and multiply and go in and inherit the land which the LORD swore to our fathers.

²And you shall remember all the ways which the LORD your God brought you these forty years in the wilderness in order to humble you, to test you, to know that which is in your heart whether or not you will keep His commandments. ³And He humbled you and He caused you to become hungry and He fed you the manna which you had not known nor did your fathers know, in order that He would make you know that man does not live on bread alone, but that man lives on all that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.

⁴Your garments did not wear out on you and your foot did not swell these forty years. ⁵And you shall know with your heart that as a man chastises his son so the LORD chastises you. ⁶And you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God to walk in His ways and to fear Him. ⁷For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of waters, of fountains and of subterranean water, that flow out in the valleys and the hills. ⁸A land of wheat and barley [bearded grain], and vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey. ⁹A land in which you shall eat bread without scarcity, in which you shall not desire anything more, a land with stones of iron and from its hills you can mine out copper. ¹⁰And you shall eat and be satisfied and you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which he gave to you."

Baptism – The Promise of Salvation is for ALL

The promise of salvation through baptism is for all. When the church was born, infants were included in baptism as well. Acts 2:38 says: "*Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*" And what does the very next verse, Acts 2:39, say? "*For the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are far off, every one whom the Lord our God calls to Him.*" The Greek word for children used here is "teknois" which includes children of any age, even infants. They were to be baptised with their parents. That way they would receive the Holy Spirit and the forgiveness of sins. They too would become members of God's newly-born church!

So, when Paul wrote to the Ephesian church saying, "*Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.*" ² "*Honour your father and mother*" (this is the first commandment with a promise), ³ "*that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land*" (6:1-3), he wrote directly also to the "children" (teknois). Again, the word "teknois" includes also infants. Infants are members of God's church. And yet only a few verses before in Ephesians 5:25-26, Paul says: "*Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it to make it holy by washing it clean with water by the Word.*" Christ's baptism is for the church. Infants, then, should be baptised and so cleansed by the "washing of water by the Word." In the same way, children are identified as members of the Colossian church (Colossians 3:20). And there too, membership in the church is given through baptism (Colossians 2:12, 19).

In Acts 26:22 Paul is brought before King Agrippa for a hearing. Paul describes his conversion on the Damascus road and his work to bring the gospel to the "small and great." Both "small" and "great" in the Greek refer to age. That Acts 26:22 is a reference

to children and infants is shown also by the phrase “mikroi kai megaloi” (small and great) itself. Wherever this phrase is used in Scripture, it refers to each and every one. No one is excluded, whether infant or adult. The usage of “small and great” emphasises all-inclusiveness. Where the phrase is used, all people (infants also) must be seen as in the realm and meaning of the passage.

John says in 1 John 2:12-13: “*I am writing to you, little children (teknia), because your sins are forgiven for His sake I write you, children (paidia), because you know the Father.*” John calls the people in the church “little children” (teknia). But then he addresses the little children per se using the Greek word “paidia.” “Paidia” was the same word used to describe the very small children brought to the arms of Jesus. Since John is writing to members of the church, he must consider children and infants as members too. Yet a man becomes a member of God’s Kingdom in John’s Gospel by being baptised (John 3:5-6). So again, infants and small children must have been baptised members of the church and not excluded as the opponents of infant baptism would have us believe. It is wrong, then, to deny infants their baptism when they are included in the other aspects of the church.

In Revelation 13:6-16 John mentions those who do not have their names in the book of life and uses the words “*both small and great.*” These are the same words Paul used before Agrippa. The words “small” and “great” do not commonly mean size in the Greek but age. And the phrase itself is all-inclusive. Revelation 19:5 refers to those who fear him, both “great and small”: “*And from the throne came a voice crying, Praise our God, all you His servants, you who fear Him, small and great.*” Infants are among those saved in heaven as well as those lost in hell. Revelation 20:12, 15 tells of the “small and great” before the throne of God: “*And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and the books were opened. Also another book was opened which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, by what they had done.... and if any one’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.*”

So if the youngest are to be judged before God with some lost and others saved, then God’s kingdom is on the line for even the littlest. And John has already explained how to enter the kingdom: “*... unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God,*” (John 3:5). This is God’s means that He has entrusted to men whereby infants, too, may become members of God’s family of faith.

Baptism, then, is the first step in an ongoing process of growth in the family of God, that family which includes the very young as well as the aged.

Baptism, as Peter said in Acts 2:38, is full of God’s promises for the youngest. In baptism, they receive the full forgiveness of their sins, sins of which they are unconscious. And they receive the gift of the Holy Spirit who preserves them in the Lord Jesus. And God is always faithful in His promises. For this, parents can only rejoice and praise the Lord, a Lord who cares for all, even the tiniest of people!

Welcome to all with us today! May God bless our worship of Him by His serving of us!

Pastor Peter Ziebell, Phone 0407583922.

Email him at paziebell@gmail.com

Weekly sermons and bulletins are available at www.aelc.org.au.

Please notify pastor of anyone who is unwell or in need of a visit.

COMING SERVICES

| 17 December 3 Advent | 24 December 4 Advent | 25 December Christmas |
|--|---|---|
| 8.30am OAK HC 8.30am TMBA PR JZ Harvest 10.00am GRN HC 10.30am AUB PR JZ Harvest 7.30pm Carols Evening OAK | 8.30am TMBA LR 9.30am AUB LR 9.00am OAK Children's Christmas Service PZ 10.00am? GRN Children's Christmas Service JZ | 8.00am TMBA HC PZ 8.00am OAK PR JZ 9.30am GRN PR JZ 10.00am AUB HC PZ Please note the change of times |
| Sunday, 17 December | | |
| READINGS: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; Harvest: Deuteronomy 26:1-11; | 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; 2 Corinthians 9:6-15; | John 1:6-8, 19-28 Luke 12:13-21 |
| HYMNS: 9 1 16 68 848 628 TMBA & AUB: 560 564 568 563 | | |
| Sunday, 24 December | | |
| READINGS: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16; | Romans 16:25-27; | Luke 1:26-38 |
| HYMNS: 2 33 746 627 | | |

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sunday, 17 December. 7.30pm. Carols Evening at Trinity Oakey. Could each family please provide a plate for supper?

THE LIGHTING OF THE SECOND ADVENT CANDLE

M: I will send My messenger to prepare the way for Me.

C: Then the Lord you are looking for will suddenly come to His temple.

M&C: Thank You, Lord Jesus, for coming to bring God's salvation. Help us to prepare the way for Your coming. Amen.